

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated below.

1. (Currently Amended) An aqueous pigment paste, free from binders and grinding resins, comprising based on its overall amount:

(A) from 15 to 25% by weight of at least one mica pigment;

(B) from 0.45 to 0.75% by weight of at least one nonassociative thickener comprising at least one methacrylate copolymer based on C₁-C₆ alkyl (meth)acrylate and (meth)acrylic acid;

(C) from 0.1 to 0.4% by weight of at least one organic amine;

(D) from 0.1 to 12% by weight of at least one nonionic surfactant; and

(E) at least 50% by weight of water.

2. (Currently Amended) The aqueous pigment paste of claim 1, wherein the at least one mica pigment (A) is present in an amount from 18 to 23% by weight.

3. (Currently Amended) The aqueous pigment paste of claim 1, wherein the at least one nonassociative thickener (B) is present in an amount from 0.5 to 0.7% by weight.

4. (Currently Amended) The aqueous pigment paste of claim 1, wherein the at least one nonassociative thickener (B) ~~contains-comprises in~~ copolymerized form at least two different C₁-C₆ alkyl (meth)acrylate monomers.

5. (Currently Amended) The aqueous pigment paste of claim 1, wherein the at least one nonassociative thickener (B), based on its overall amount, ~~contains-comprises~~ from 40 to 60% by weight of methacrylic acid in copolymerized form.

6. (Currently Amended) The aqueous pigment paste of claim 1, wherein the at least one organic amine (C) comprises a tertiary amine.

7. (Currently Amended) The aqueous pigment paste of claim 6, wherein the tertiary amine comprises a hydroxylalkylamine.

8. (Currently Amended) The aqueous pigment paste of claim 7, wherein the hydroxylalkylamine is dimethylethanolamine.

9. (Currently Amended) The aqueous pigment paste of claim 1, wherein the at least one organic amine (C) is present in an amount of from 0.2 to 0.3% by weight.

10. (Currently Amended) The aqueous pigment paste of claim 1, wherein the at least one nonionic surfactant (D) is present in an amount of from 0.5 to 10% by weight.

11. (Currently Amended) The aqueous pigment paste of claim 1, wherein the water is present in an amount that is at least 55% by weight.

12. (Currently Amended) An aqueous coating material comprising the aqueous pigment paste of claim 1, wherein the aqueous coating material is selected from the group consisting of one of an aqueous effect coating material ~~or and an aqueous~~ color and effect, coating material.

13. (Currently Amended) The aqueous coating material of claim 12, wherein the aqueous coating material is an aqueous basecoat material.

14. (Currently Amended) The aqueous coating material of claim 12, wherein the aqueous coating material can produce a multicoat effect, or color and effect, paint system.

15. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing an aqueous effect or color and effect coating material, comprising by-mixing the at-least-one aqueous pigment paste of claim 1 with at least one aqueous mixing varnish comprising at least binder that is one water-soluble, and/or water-dispersible-binder, or a combination thereof, in an amount such that the resulting aqueous effect or color and effect coating material comprises based on its overall amount;

- from 2 to 6% by weight of the at least one mica pigment (A);
- from 0.1 to 2% by weight of the at least one nonassociative thickener (B); comprising at least one methacrylate-copolymer based on C₄-C₆-alkyl (meth)acrylate and (meth)acrylic acid, and
- from 0.02 to 2.4% by weight of the at least one nonionic surfactant (D);

to produce a mixture; and

homogenizing the ~~resulting~~ mixture.

16. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 15, wherein the at least one binder is at least one of selected from the group consisting of an addition (co)polymer of at least one ethylenically unsaturated monomer, a polyaddition resin, and/or a polycondensation resin, and a combination thereof, wherein the addition (co)polymer is selected from the group consisting of at least one of a random (co)polymer, an alternating (co)polymer, and a block (co)polymer, and a combination thereof, and wherein the addition (co)polymer is further selected from the group consisting of at least one of linear, branched, and comb, and a combination thereof.

17. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 16, wherein the addition (co)polymer of at least one ethylenically unsaturated monomer is selected from the group consisting of at least one of a (meth)acrylate (co)polymer, and/or a partially hydrolyzed polyvinyl ester, and a combination thereof, and the polyaddition resin and/or polycondensation resin are selected from the group consisting of is at least one of a polyester, an alkyd, a polyurethane, a polylactones, a polycarbonate, a polyether, an epoxy resin-amine adduct, a polyurea, a polyamide, a polyimide, a polyester-polyurethane, a polyether-polyurethane, and/or polyester-polyether-polyurethane, and a combination thereof.